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# NEWS

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 9 A.M. EST  
October 27, 1997

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## **REDESIGNED U.S. \$50 BILL DEBUTS TODAY** **Redesigned note includes low-vision feature**

The Federal Reserve began issuing today, Monday, October 27, redesigned Series 1996 \$50 notes. The new notes, which will be widely available in banks and other depository institutions around the world in the coming days and weeks, incorporate new features to protect against counterfeiting and make U.S. currency more easily identifiable to people with low vision.

The Series 1996 \$50 note follows the introduction in March 1996 of the redesigned \$100 note and is part of an ongoing program to maintain the security of the nation's currency. The redesigned \$20 note will be introduced next year. The new series notes contain important features that provide significant security against counterfeiting, particularly the threat posed by reprographic technologies such as scanners and color copiers.

"Since its introduction, the new \$100 bill has been extremely effective against counterfeiting and we expect the same from this new \$50," said Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin. "We have seen in the first year of circulation alone significantly less counterfeiting of the new note compared to the older series. We are absolutely committed to ensuring our currency continues to be respected throughout the world as a store of value and means of exchange -- the symbol of security it has been for so long."

Beginning with today's initial shipments to local depository institutions from the Federal Reserve System's 37 offices and branches, Fed banks will fulfill all future orders only with the new notes. New notes will replace the older series notes as they are returned to the Federal Reserve. Currency is shipped to foreign countries through commercial banks with Federal Reserve accounts.

"We are most gratified with the successful introduction of the new \$100 note and look forward to the same success with the \$50," Federal Reserve Board Chairman Greenspan said. "Our currency is trusted and accepted by people throughout the world. Because of this special status, the protection of our currency from counterfeiting has long been a priority."

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Chairman Greenspan and Secretary Rubin stressed that there will be no recall or devaluation of older series notes.

The redesigned \$50 note and subsequent denominations also will include a large dark numeral on a light background on the back of the note that will make it easier for the more than 3.7 million Americans with low vision to denominate the note. The feature will also be useful to the 10 million Americans with milder forms of visual impairment and other users of U.S. currency in low-light situations. In a January 1995 study solicited by the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the National Academy of Sciences recommended incorporation of the feature.

"The large numeral on the back of the bill will not only help those with low vision to identify a note, it will help everyone who needs to pay for something in low light, such as in a dimly lit bus or taxi cab," Secretary Rubin said.

In order to make room for the new features, the overall architecture of the note has been changed somewhat and the borders simplified. Microprinting and security threads, which first appeared in the 1991 series currency, have been effective deterrents and will appear in the new notes. The new and modified \$50 note features include:

- A large numeral "50" on the back of the note.
- A larger portrait, moved off-center to create more space for a watermark.
- The watermark to the right of the portrait depicting the same historical figure as the portrait. The watermark can be seen only when held up to the light.
- A security thread to the right of the portrait that glows yellow when exposed to ultraviolet light in a dark environment. "USA 50" and a flag, which itself contains microprinting, are printed on the thread. (In the \$100, the thread is to the left of the portrait, glows red, and is printed with the words "USA 100.")
- Color-shifting ink in the numeral on the lower right-hand corner of the bill front that changes from green to black when viewed from different angles.
- Microprinting in the border and in Ulysses Grant's shirt collar in the \$50 note. (In the \$100 note, microprinting is found in the numeral in the note's lower left-hand corner and on Benjamin Franklin's lapel.)
- Concentric fine-line printing in the background of the portrait and on the back of the note. This type of printing is difficult to copy well.
- Other features for machine authentication and processing of the currency.

In addition to the low-vision feature on the note back, the \$50 looks different in several other ways. The engraving of the Capitol has been enlarged to include more detail, and reflects an accurate contemporary view of the west front of the Capitol. The security thread images and characters are also printed in two different heights.

Over \$400 billion in U.S. currency is in circulation, two-thirds of it overseas. The U.S. Information Agency and U.S. consular posts around the world will help educate foreign users of U.S. currency about the redesign program.

Fact sheets on the new note, the history of U.S. currency and related agencies are available on Treasury's interactive fax at (202) 622-2040 (for an index, request document # 1745) and on the Treasury's website: [WWW.USTREAS.GOV](http://WWW.USTREAS.GOV).